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Accused Spy Says He Meant To Promote U.S., China Ties

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Retired Central Intelligence Agency analyst Larry Wu-Tai Chin said yesterday that he took classified information and gave it to Chinese intelligence agents for 11 years as part of a private "mission" to reconcile China and the United States, adding that the money he received was "a byproduct" of that endeavor.

His remarks, delivered to a hushed and crowded federal courtroom in Alexandria, came at the close of the third day of his trial on charges of espionage for allegedly having passed secret information to the Chinese since 1949.

Chin's motives are the heart of his defense against the espionage charges that government prosecutors have outlined, using his statements to FBI agents before his arrest, entries from his diaries, bank records, and testimony from members of the U.S. intelligence community.

As his wife Cathy and two sons looked on, Chin, 63, told the jury of nine women and three men that soon after receiving "top secret" security clearance in 1970 while working at the CIA's Foreign Broadcast Information Service, he came across a classified report about a secret message from then President Richard Nixon to Congress outlining Nixon's wish to improve relations with China.

"I was stunned by this about-face on the part of President Nixon," Chin said, adding he believed that "if this information is brought to the attention of the Chinese leadership . . . it might break the ice. I wanted [former premier] Chou En-lai to see it."

Chin, who was born in Peking and is a naturalized U.S. citizen, said that his homeland was such a closed society and there was so much "suspicion and paranoia" toward the West that "it was impossible for the leadership of China to receive information reflecting the true intentions of the United States."

Chiu said that his access to classified information and his contacts with Chinese officials gave him "a

direct link with the core leadership comparable to the 'hot line' between Washington and Moscow."

This he said, gave him hope that "someday I can play a very important role" in fostering a rapprochement between the two countries.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph J. Aronica, boring in on Chin's admissions, asked him if he was "stealing documents from the CIA and giving them to the Chinese?"

"Right," Chin replied.

"You knew the documents you gave . . . would go to the highest levels of the Chinese government, to the Politburo?"

"Yes," Chin answered.

"Your intent was to help the People's Republic of China?"

"Yes and, in the meantime, the U.S., too," Chin said.

Aronica asked if it was true that Chin lied when he signed the secrecy agreement required of CIA employees with security clearances.

"I did lie when I signed the secrecy agreement because I wanted to advance my mission," Chin replied.

"You wanted to advance your pockets," Aronica retorted.

"That was only a byproduct of my mission," Chin answered, adding that the money that he received from his Chinese contacts was "far less than what I earned from FBIS."

Internal Revenue Service agent Wilson McCarthy testified yesterday that, in reviewing records seized from Chin's Alexandria apartment in November, he found deposits for \$84,000 to Hong Kong bank accounts in Chin's name between 1978 and 1982. In addition, there were records that showed \$98,000 worth of gold held in a Hong Kong account.

Chin, who also is charged with failing to report taxable income and to acknowledge foreign bank accounts, further failed to report about \$9,000 in interest on the Hong Kong accounts, McCarthy testified. Chin's records also show that between 1976 and 1982 he paid \$96,700 in gambling debts to casinos that had cut off his credit.

When Aronica asked why he had not reported this income to the Internal Revenue Service, Chin said "that had to be done, there was no other way out."

Testimony also revealed that Chin had been audited by the IRS seven times prior to his arrest.

As an employee of FBIS, a section of the CIA that monitors and translates foreign radio broadcasts and publications, Chin had access to a wealth of highly classified material, including interagency memorandums, handwritten reports from covert agents and reports prepared for the White House, government witnesses have testified.